

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1435

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: COOPERATION WITH ICELAND ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER HAS MADE SUGGESTION WHICH AFFORDS USG A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP STEER ICELAND TOWARD CLOSER COOPERATION WITH USG AND WEST IN FIELD OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE HAS SUGGESTED THAT YOU TOGETHER WITH EITHER CNO HOLLOWAY OR ADMIRAL COUSINS VISIT REYKJAVIK LATTER PART OF NOVEMBER TO HELP "EDUCATE" ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, OTHER PARLIAMENTARIANS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF ABOVE-MENTIONED RELATIONSHIP. I HEARTILY ENDORSE SUGGESTION AND URGE VISIT. IDEAL IMPACT PERIOD WOULD BE ARRIVAL NOT LATER THAN THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21 AND STAY AS LONG AS YOU ARE ABLE BUT AT LEAST THROUGH FRIDAY AND SATURDAY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER STOPPED BY RESIDENCE FOR A CUP OF COFFEE ON WAY TO HIS OFFICE SATURDAY AND WHILE WE WERE REMINISCING OVER THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF THE PAST TWO YEARS ON THE US-ICELAND DEFENSE ISSUE, HE REMARKED HE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH USG SO AS TO PUT ICELAND FIRMLY ON OUR SIDE IN DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL REQUIRE A CONTINUING JOB OF EDUCATING THE ICELANDIC POLITICIANS
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AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. HE SAID HIS OWN PARTY AND OTHER

PRO-U.S. ICELANDERS TOOK FOR GRANTED DURING THE 1960'S THAT NOTHING COULD DISRUPT THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND CONSEQUENTLY WERE CAUGHT OFF GUARD IN 1971 WHEN A LEFTIST GOVT CAME TO POWER THAT TRIED TO THROW THE IDF OUT OF THE COUNTRY. HE WOULD LIKE TO PREVENT REOCCURRENCE OF THIS AND BELIEVES HE NEEDS OUR COOPERATION IN THIS ENDEAVOR. HE SUGGESTED WE BEGIN THIS JOINT EFFORT SOON WITH A HIGH LEVEL VISITOR FROM THE US ON THE HEELS OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED US-GOI DEFENSE AGREEMENT. HE SPOKE VERY HIGHLY OF YOU AND YOUR PERSONAL ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT THIS DEFENSE AGREEMENT. HE REMARKED THAT YOUR NAME IS WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN IN ICELAND AND THAT YOU WOULD BE THE IDEAL IMPACT-VISITOR FOR WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. ALTHOUGH HE IS AWARE THAT YOU HAVE A BUSY SCHEDULE HE ASKED ME TO URGE YOU TO FIND TIME TO COME.

3. REMEMBERING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADMIRAL ZUMWALT'S VISIT LAST MARCH THE PRIMEMIN ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE EITHER CNO HOLLOWAY OR ADMIRAL COUSINS TO COME HERE AT THE SAME TIME. HE THOUGHT SUCH A COMBINED VISIT WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY FACTORS AND REMIND ICELANDERS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IDF RETENTION IN STRIVING FOR DETENTE. PRIMEMIN IS ONE OF THE RELATIVELY FEW ICELANDIC POLITICIANS WHO REALIZES WORLD HAS NOT YET ACHIEVED SUCH A STATE.

4. PRIME MIN SAID THAT IF THE TWO OF YOU COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO COME TO ICELAND HE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD SCHEDULE YOUR APPEARANCE BEFORE ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND WOULD HOST DINNER YOUR HONOR WHICH WOULD GIVE YOU WIDE AND SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO TIMING OF VISIT, PRIMEMIN WILL BE ABSENT FROM COUNTRY FROM NOVEMBER 3 TO ABOUT 15TH OR 16TH. IT WOULD BE GOOD THEREFORE TO HAVE VISIT TAKE PLACE AFTER MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER BUT BEFORE DECEMBER 1ST WHICH IS ICELANDIC INDEPENDENCE DAY WHEN LEFTIST

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STUDENTS TRADITIONALLY AND WITH MUCH PUBLICITY MOUNT ANTI-U.S. AND ANTI-MILITARY SPEECHES AND DEMONSTRATIONS. YOUR PRESENCE BEFORE DECEMBER 1ST COULD HELP BLUNT THEIR THRUST. IN MY JUDGMENT THE IDEAL PERIOD WOULD BE AS MENTIONED PARA ONE, ABOVE, NOT ONLY FOR THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS BUT FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW AS WELL. FRIDA EVENING NOVEMBER 22 MY WIFE AND I ARE HOSTING DINNER AT RESIDENCE FOR PRESIDENT OF ICELAND AND MRS.

ELDJARN. PRESIDENT IS VERY POPULAR AMONG INTELLECTUALS AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY WHO ARE HELD IN HIGH REGARD IN THIS COUNTRY, BUT TOO MANY OF WHOM BELIEVE ICELAND CAN BE NEUTRAL POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY. THE PRESIDENT HAS HIMSELF HELD THIS VIEW FOR A LONG TIME, BUT I DETECT IN CASUAL CONVERSATIONS I HAVE HAD WITH HIM THAT HE MAY BE HAVING DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE. YOUR ATTENDANCE AND THAT OF THE ADMIRAL AT THE DINNER WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP INFLUENCE ICELANDIC THINKING AT ANOTHER IMPORTANT LEVEL. I WOULD, OF COURSE, COORDINATE THE GUEST LIST WITH THE PRIMEMIN TO AFFORD THE WIDEST IMPACT POSSIBLE.

6. I ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSE THE PRIMEMIN'S SUGGESTION AND URGE YOUR FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION FOR THE VISIT. THE ADVANTAGES TO USG ARE MANY, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF IDFRENTION, BUT FOR THE MANY OTHER ISSUES WHERE A FAVORABLE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM A NORDIC NATION WOULD SERVE IMPORTANT USG PURPOSES. I CANNOT PROMISE YOU GOOD WEATHER, FOR AT THAT TIME OF THE YEAR IT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS "ROTTEN." I CAN PROMISE, HOWEVER, THAT A VISIT FROM YOU TOGETHER WITH EITHER ADMIRALS HOLLOWAY OR COUSINS AT THIS TIME WILL ENHANCE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES.

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